

Lateral Thinking Puzzle

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This week I present for your summer entertainment a selection of lateral thinking puzzles. They are mostly culled from a collection of puzzles compiled by Paul Sloane and an expanded list can be found at <http://rec-puzzles.org/lateral.html>.

1. The Man in the Elevator.

A man lives on the tenth floor of a building. Every day he takes the elevator to go down to the ground floor to go to work or to go shopping. When he returns he takes the elevator to the seventh floor and walks up the stairs to reach his apartment on the tenth floor. He hates walking so why does he do it?

2. Who is the Shooter?

A policeman was walking past a house. He heard someone cry, 'Don't shoot me, John! Don't shoot!' There was a gunshot. The policeman entered the house and saw a lawyer, priest, and an engineer, gathered around a dead body. The priest was immediately arrested. How did the policeman know?

3. The Man Who Hanged Himself.

Not far from Madrid, there is a large wooden barn. The barn is completely empty except for a dead man hanging from the middle of the central rafter. The rope around his neck is ten feet long and his feet are three feet off the ground. The nearest wall is 20 feet away from the man. It is not possible to climb up the walls or along the rafters. The man hanged himself. How did he do it?

4. Death in a Field.

A man is lying dead in a field. Next to him there is an unopened package. There is no other creature in the field. How did he die?

5. Anthony and Cleopatra.

Anthony and Cleopatra are lying dead on the floor of a villa in Egypt. Nearby is a broken bowl. There is no mark on either of their bodies and they were not poisoned. How did they die?

6. The Coal, Carrot and Scarf.

Five pieces of coal, a carrot and a scarf are lying on the lawn. Nobody put them on the lawn but there is a perfectly logical reason why they should be there. What is it?

7. Trouble with Sons.

A woman had two sons who were born on the same hour of the same day of the same year. But they were not twins, and they were not adopted. How could this be so?

8. Heaven.

A man died and went to Heaven. There were thousands of other people there. They were all naked and all looked as they did at the age of 21. He looked around to see if there was anyone he recognised. He saw a couple and he knew immediately that they were Adam and Eve. How did he know?

9. Friday.

A man rode into town on Friday. He stayed for three nights and then left on Friday. How come?

10. Manhole Covers.

Why is it better to have round manhole covers than square ones?

11. The Deadly Party.

A man went to a party and drank some of the punch. He then left early. Everyone else at the party who drank the punch subsequently died of poisoning. Why did the man not die?

12. The Realization.

A man was walking downstairs in a building when he suddenly realized that his wife had just died. How?

13. The Music Stopped.

The music stopped. She died. Explain.